

restraint and sobriety of expression. It would seem to be directly attributable to the increasing consciousness of the great responsibility which its enormous power entails. The following extract from the Chairman's address admirably illustrates this.

“The financial strain the country is to-day bearing, and which must continue for many years to come, is, although not a popular subject, of vital consideration to all sections of our people, and to none more than the working classes. The dependency of our country upon and from the markets of the world means that a collapse of our credit would result in starvation, and at a time when this certain and pregnant fact is inclined to be overlooked, certainly not receiving the serious consideration it should do, no apology is needed for reminding a party that rightly aspire to the government of the nation to keep it in mind. It may be inconvenient to remind people of the fact, but they would be the first to condemn any party who blindly moulded its policy and pursued its course regardless of so dangerous a precipice. Governments may continue to manufacture paper credits, private firms cannot meet their obligations in the same easy way. They may borrow, but the result to both will be the same—ruin. Don't let us, in our demand for social justice, forget or ignore this fact.”

An incident that occurred during the proceedings has a similar significance. In the course of a discussion a delegate interjected the suggestion of ‘a general strike’, whereupon the chairman turned upon him with the remark that threats of a general strike lose their effectiveness ‘when people are always talking about it and don't do it.’ The Congress endorsed the rebuke with its cheers.

The concluding speech from the chair showed this spirit of responsibility in stronger relief than ever. Referring to the impending coal strike, Thomas urged :

“Don't let us during the next few weeks do or say anything that will render a settlement more difficult. Let us realise that we are at a stage where every word should be carefully weighed, every action deliberately thought out, and whilst we are determined to have justice for our own class, we are equally determined to keep in mind the interests of the whole community.”

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

OFFICE

GENEVA

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October 11th, 1920.

International Congress of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades.

Thirty-three delegates, representing the International Federations of Bakers and Pastrycooks, Brewers and Millers, Butchers and Pork Butchers, met in the Maison du Peuple at Zurich on the 25th, 26th and 27th August, to consider the creation of a Food and Drink Trades International. The initiative in this matter was taken by the International Federation of Bakers. At the Congress at Amsterdam, in August, 1919, it instructed its Secretary, Alleman (of Hamburg), to take the necessary steps. At that time the federation of the four following associations was contemplated :

1. Bakers, Pastrycooks, Chocolate-makers, Confectioners and Biscuit-makers ;
2. Brewers and Millers ;
3. Butchers and Pork Butchers ;
4. Hotel Employees and Waiters.

This latter body preferred to reserve its decision.

Certain countries, such as France, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia, have constituted National Food Producers' Federations on an industrial basis ; others, such as Germany, have only craft federations. This difference of constitution produced a certain inequality in the number of delegates sent by each country.

The list of the delegates is as follows :—

Germany : 8 Delegates.

Federation of Bakers and Pastrycooks : 4 delegates, representing 60,000 members.

Federation of Brewers and Millers : 3 delegates, representing 75,000 members.

Federation of Butchers and Pork Butchers : 1 delegate, representing 23,700 members.

Austria : 3 Delegates.

Federation of Food and Drink Trades : 3 delegates, representing 26,000 members.

Hungary : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Bakers : 1 delegate, representing 7,000 members.
Federation of Butchers : 1 delegate, representing 1,000 members.

Czecho-Slovakia : 4 Delegates.

Federation of Brewers, Millers and Food and Drink Trades : 3 delegates, representing 21,000 members.
Federation of Workers in the Food and Drink Industry Trades : 1 delegate, representing 4,000 members.

Italy : 1 Delegate.

National Federation of Food and Drink Trades : 1 delegate, representing 25,000 members.

Switzerland : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Food and Drink Trades : 2 delegates, representing 20,000 members.

Denmark : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Bakers : 1 delegate, representing 6,300 members.
Federation of Butchers : 1 delegate, representing 7,000 members.

Sweden : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Bakers : 1 delegate, representing 8,000 members.
Federation of Butchers : 1 delegate, representing 2,000 members.

Norway : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Bakers : 1 delegate, representing 2,200 members.
Federation of Butchers : 1 delegate, representing 700 members.

Belgium : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Food and Drink Trades : 2 delegates, representing 10,000 members.

France : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Food and Drink Trades : 2 delegates, representing 21,024 members.

Holland : 2 Delegates.

Federation of Bakers : 1 delegate, representing 6,000 members.
Federation of Butchers : 1 delegate, representing 1,500 members.

North America : 1 Delegate.

Industrial Workers of the World : 1 delegate, representing 3,950 members.

A representative of the International Labour Office was also present at the Congress.

Agenda.

The Agenda contained the following items :

Creation of an International Federation of Food and Drink Trades.
Discussion of the Constitution of the Union.
Choice of Headquarters.
Creation of an International Secretariat.
Election of Officers.
Fixing the Amount of the Contributions.

THE OPENING SITTING.

The opening sitting was presided over by Alleman (Hamburg), Secretary of the International Federation of Bakers, which numbers at present more than 150,000 members.

In the morning, the delegates of the different branches met separately, to consider the question of federating the above associations into a single International.

PLENARY SITTING.

On the proposal of the French delegate Savoye, a vote of sympathy was passed, addressed to all the workers of the world who are fighting for their emancipation.

The Duplication of Organisations in Czecho-Slovakia.

Immediately afterwards the Congress dealt with the question of the difficulties of organisation caused in Czecho-Slovakia by differences of nationality. Two organisations have

been formed in the Food and Drink Trades: « The Federation of Brewers, Millers and Workers in the Food and Drink Trades », the headquarters of which is at Prague, and the « Federation of the Food and Drink Industry Trades », the headquarters of which is at Bodenbach on the Elbe. The latter organisation includes the German-speaking workers.

Now, the constitution of the International Federation of Bakers and Pastrycooks prohibits the establishment of two organisations of the same branch of industry in one country. Following on a decision at their own Conference, the Bakers accordingly asked the Congress to decide upon the amalgamation of the two rival groups. But the German speaking delegates insisted on the difficulties which the diversity of languages placed in the way of the full recognition of their rights, and invoked certain precedents in Czecho-Slovakian organisations belonging to the late Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In view of the acuteness of the problem and its general character, several delegates proposed the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:—

« The Congress considers that a plurality of national languages within one State does not justify the constitution of several organisations for the same branch of industry. Nevertheless, considering that the question of unity of organisation does not concern exclusively the two Federations of Food and Drink Trades in the Czecho-Slovakian Republic, the Congress resolves to refer the definite decision on this matter to the next International Trade Union Congress. Until such time as this decision has been given, the two Federations shall be admitted to the International Federation of Food and Drink Trades. Without prejudice to the decision of the International Trade Union Congress, the International Federation of Food and Drink Trades invites the two Federations to prepare an agreement based upon an equality of rights. »

Creation of an International Federation of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades.

The three International Federations were agreed as to the necessity of uniting for the common defence of the rights of the workers in the Food and Drink Trades. The delegates of the respective countries spoke in turn in favour of the establishment of the new Federation.

Braga (Italy) asked that the doors should not be opened too wide, so that the new organisation might possess the homogeneity indispensable to successful action. He wished the Congress to adopt a well-defined programme, and asked that it should decide in favour of the abolition of night work and the socialisation of the industries connected with food production.

Lankes (Germany) was in favour of federation, but with the reservation that the International Federation should not

interfere in the internal affairs of the different national organisations.

The Norwegian delegate gave his approval, but referred to a tendency towards de-centralisation in his country.

After other delegates had given their views, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

The International Congress of Men and Women Workers in the Food and Drink Trades, considering that the concentration of the production of foodstuffs of many different kinds in a small number of great establishments is becoming more and more general, and that this concentration of production has given rise in a number of States to the union of the workers' federations of these branches into general federations of workers in the Food and Drink Trades, resolves:— That the three International Associations, namely the Association of Bakers, Pastrycooks, etc., the Association of Brewers and Millers, and the Association of Butchers and Pork Butchers, shall amalgamate into one « International Union of Men and Women Workers in the Food and Drink Trades ». The amalgamation shall come into effect on the 1st October, 1920.

« The three now existing associations shall transfer to the new organisation their assets and liabilities. The International Union of Men and Women Workers in the Food and Drink Trades shall not interfere in matters relating to the internal organisation of the federations in the different States, and proclaims the complete autonomy of such national federations. Nevertheless, the Congress declares that the amalgamation of small federations of particular branches into powerful organisations of the whole industry is desirable.

« All existing Federations of Men and Women Workers in the Food and Drink Trades, whether federations of branches or federations of the whole industry, shall be bound to give their adhesion to the said international organisation ».

After this important resolution, which establishes the International of the Food and Drink Trades, had been carried, a resolution was passed, requesting the Secretary of the new association to take the necessary steps to obtain the adhesion of the International Federation of Hotel Employees.

Choice of Headquarters.

The choice of the headquarters of the International Union gave rise to long, and often heated, discussions, and was marked by a difference of opinion in the German delegation.

The headquarters of the « International Federation of Bakers and Pastrycooks » is at present in Hamburg. Those of the two other Federations are also in Germany. For this reason the German Delegation considered that it had a right to ask that the Secretariat of the Union be allowed to be in Germany.

However, at the Congress of the Bakers and Pastrycooks at Amsterdam in 1919, the Germans had agreed to the transfer

of the headquarters for reasons of convenience, and it was therefore for the present congress to fix the country in which the Secretariat should be situated. The French Delegates, therefore, in agreement with the Dutch, proposed Amsterdam. The Italian delegate declared for Switzerland. The Belgian representative, in view of the insistence of the Germans in favour of Hamburg, reminded them with some bitterness of the sentiments of distrust, which still exist in many quarters towards their country, and requested them, for this reason, to agree to the choice of Amsterdam. The translation of this speech aroused the indignation of some of the members of the German delegation. They declared that they considered these reproaches unmerited, and that under these conditions they would abide by their proposal. It should be noted, however, that the delegates of Independent Socialist tendencies, Hanck and Lankes, were not opposed to the transfer, which caused them to be severely criticised by their colleagues.

Switzerland having been proposed, Schifferstein, the Swiss delegate, spoke. He declared himself in favour of keeping the headquarters in Germany, but added that if, for reasons considered to be of greater weight, it was necessary to give up this idea, his organisation was willing to accept the secretariat.

Savoye, the French Delegate, made a speech in which he tried to reconcile the two points of view. He affirmed that the French proletariat harboured no sentiments of animosity towards the German proletariat. His attitude should not be interpreted as a sign of mistrust towards the Germans who had fulfilled their task as well as circumstances permitted. Having heard these words, the German delegation requested to be allowed to retire for a few minutes in order to consider the situation, and, on its return, Hetzhold announced that, having taken note of the declaration of the French delegate, and in the interest of the new International, the German delegation withdrew its opposition to the transfer and decided in favour of Switzerland. Zurich was unanimously chosen as the headquarters.

Schifferstein, the Secretary of the Swiss Federation of the Food and Drink Trades, was appointed International Secretary.

International Constitution.

A Commission of six members was nominated to prepare a draft constitution. This draft was adopted in all its details, with the exception of one point relating to the representation of the various international sections. In the original text the distribution of votes was as follows:—

Up to 2,000 members : 1 delegate.

From 2,000 to 5,000 members : 2 delegates.

From 5,000 to 10,000 members : 3 delegates.

Over 10,000 members : 1 delegate for each additional 10,000 members.

According to this scale, Germany, with its 158,708 members, would have had 18 votes, while only 4 would have gone to France. The French delegate protested. The Belgian delegate pointed out the danger which this distribution would have had for Germany itself when the Russian Trade Unions entered the organisation. An agreement was finally arrived at for a maximum of 8 votes for one country.

Apart from this point, the only provision in this Constitution that need be reproduced here is Article I relating to the objects of the organisation, which is as follows:—

« The International Federation of the Central Organisations of the Men and Women Workers in the Food and Drink Trades, has for its object: to protect and promote the economic and social interests of all the workers of the association; to strengthen by all available means the international solidarity of the working classes and to support all national and international action in the struggle against the exploitation of labour; to support everywhere the struggle against imperialism and militarism; and to work for the suppression of the capitalist régime by the realisation of the socialist economic system.

This object will be attained by the following means:

- (a) Reciprocal information and agreement on questions of importance in the trade union and economic world and in that of protective labour legislation.
- (b) Payment of travelling expenses of unemployed members.
- (c) Conclusion of treaties of reciprocity.
- (d) The placing on the index of places in which wage disputes are in progress, with a view to preventing the arrival of foreign workers. »

The German delegate, Hanck, would have liked the Congress to insert in the Constitution an Article requesting each affiliated organisation to study the principle of Works' Councils; but the Commission rejected this proposal, as it considered that the different States were not all in the same position for dealing with this question.

CLOSING SITTING.

At its closing sitting the Congress unanimously voted three resolutions, one relating to Night Work, another to the Russian Soviet Republic, and the third to Socialisation. The three texts are given below:—

1. — *Resolution relating to Night Work :*

« Considering that Night Work constitutes a terrible scourge from the sanitary, economic, intellectual and moral points of view for all the categories of workers who are subjected thereto ; that it separates that portion of the working class from the rest of humanity, and thus prevents its free participation in the benefits of civilisation ; that it menaces in the most serious manner the general health of the people by the transmission to the consumers of diseases contracted by the workers in the Food and Drink Trades ; and that it is an enemy to progress, to general culture, to national economy and to the healthy growth of the population (Bevölkerungspolitik), the Congress invites the International Secretariat at Zurich to use every effort to secure the legal prohibition in all civilised countries of life-sapping night work, with the exception of occasional work of an absolutely necessary character. »

2. — *Resolution relating to the Russian Soviet Republic :*

« The International Congress of the Food and Drink Trades expresses its entire sympathy with the Russian Proletariat in its struggle against International Imperialism. The delegates undertake to prevent by every means any action which may be undertaken in their own countries against the Russian Soviet Republic. »

3. — *Resolution relating to Socialisation :*

« The International Congress, convinced that Capitalist production is not in a position to permit to the working classes an existence worthy of human beings, welcomes with joy the international propaganda for the socialisation of industry, in order that the fruits of labour may no longer benefit a capitalist minority, but the whole of the labouring population, and requests the affiliated organisations to employ every means to attain this object as speedily as possible. »

As a result of the decisions of this Congress, there exists to-day an International Federation of the Food and Drink Trades. One of its first acts has been to emphasise the importance of a problem, — the study of which enters directly within the competence of the International Labour Office, — the problem of the international measures to be taken with a view to the abolition of night work in the Food and Drink Trades.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

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GENEVA

10 October 1920

Studies and Reports

Series A

No. 5

The British Government and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.

In their Annual Conference commencing 6th July, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain formulated the following demands :

*That the price of household coal be reduced 14/2d per ton¹ ;
That wages be increased 2/- a shift for men, 1/- for youths and 1/9d for boys.*

On 26th July, the Government definitely declined to concede these claims.

On 1st September, a ballot of the miners declared in favour of a strike by 606,782 votes to 238,865. Strike notices were handed in to terminate in all districts not later than 25th September.

The President of the Board of Trade, Sir Robert Horne, invited the miners' executive to meet him on 9th September "in order to avoid any misunderstandings as to our respective points of view".

A verbatim report of the ensuing Conference is given below.

CONFERENCE BETWEEN SIR ROBERT HORNE AND THE MINERS FEDERATION.

Sir Robert Horne, G. B. E., K.C., M.P., President of the Board of Trade, was accompanied by Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade), Mr. W. C. Bridgeman, M.P. (Secretary of Mines), Sir Sydney Chapman (Permanent Secretary, Board of Trade), Mr. A. R. Duncan (Coal Controller), and Mr. G. A. Gowers (Secretary of Mines Department). The members of the Miners' Federation Executive present were Mr. Robert Smillie (president), Mr. Frank Hodges (secretary), and Messrs. Herbert Smith, R. Shirkie, J. Hood, G. Barker, S. Roebuck, J. Potts, L. Lovett, W. Whitefield,

¹ On 12th May 1920 the British Government raised the controlled price of household coal by 14/2d per ton.